

**STATE SENATOR • JIM BARCIA • 31ST DISTRICT**

# **Barcia Press Release**

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## **BARCIA CALLS ON MICHIGAN DELEGATION TO ASSIST SUGAR BEET GROWERS**

LANSING - Sen. Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) today called on Michigan's federal delegation to seek relief for Michigan's sugar beet growers. Due to a disastrous beet storage season, Michigan Sugar predicts that beet production will be down significantly from previous estimates and growers throughout Michigan are poised to lose tens of thousands of dollars in payments for acres of beets grown.

In a letter sent to United States Senator's Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, as well as every member of Michigan's House delegation, Barcia urged Congress to "act swiftly to address this most recent disaster and provide financial relief to affected sugar beet growers." Barcia pointed out that in 2003, Congress created the Sugar Beet Disaster Program to address a similar crisis in crop production in the years 2001 and 2002. Without similar federal assistance for this year's disaster individual sugar beet growers stand to lose tens of thousands of dollars in payments for their crop.

"I intend to seek relief from the State of Michigan for sugar beet growers, including possible forbearance on repayments from zero-interest loans that were extended during the last crop disaster, said Barcia. "However, with the State's severe budget deficit, federal action will be required to secure the amount of assistance necessary to provide comprehensive relief."

Since returning to the Michigan Senate, Senator Barcia has been at the forefront in promoting and protecting Michigan's sugar industry. In 2003, Barcia sponsored a resolution (SR 175 of 2003) and has spoken out forcefully to oppose the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which would devastate Michigan's sugar industry. In 2004, he sponsored and passed SB 1349 (PA 342 of 2004), which paved the way for the merger of Michigan and Monitor Sugar.

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